

Cost-of-living support

Find out what help and support is available to you and your family

Get in touch with us to let us know if you're struggling with your finances

We want to support those families in our school community who are impacted the most. If you are struggling with finances, please do get in touch to let us know on financequeries@wealdgs.org as there may be things we can suggest which will help.

Contact your local Citizen's Advice Bureau or Family Hub

Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)

You do not have to be a UK citizen to get support from your local CAB, you just need to be a resident of the local area. The CAB can help you with:

- Getting benefits or other financial support organised
- Accessing support for essential costs (food, bills, rent)

Visit the [Citizens Advice](#)'s website or contact your local branch to book an appointment

- Tonbridge branch - Tonbridge Castle, Castle Street, Tonbridge, TN9 1BG
- Sevenoaks branch - 5A Bligh's Court, Bligh's Meadow, Sevenoaks, TN13 1DD

Family Hub

Contact your local Family Hub to get help accessing all the support you might need as a family.

[Kent Family Hub - Kent County Council](#)

Spurgeons Family Hub Maidstone <https://spurgeons.org/>

Check you are paying the right amount of tax

Make sure you are on the right tax code. If you are not you might be due a refund. Use the [Money Saving Expert](#) free tax code calculator to find out.

Claim any benefits you are entitled to

Use 1 of these benefits calculators to determine whether there are any benefits you could be claiming:

- [Turn2us](#)
- [Policy in Practice](#)
- [Support for migrant families](#) – use this calculator if you are a migrant family, or if you have no recourse to public funds

You may be able to get benefits paid early if you are already feeling the squeeze - this is known as 'a short-term benefit advance' - you will need to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) office that is dealing with your claim.

Find out what help you can get with your bills

- Take a look at these resources from [British Gas Energy Trust](#) and the [Money Saving Expert](#) website.
 - Households receiving benefits such as Universal Credit could be eligible for discounted broadband tariffs. Find out more via [Ofcom's website](#).
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Let us know if your child is entitled to free school meals (FSM)

If your child is eligible for free school meals (FSM) you need to get them registered. This will allow them to get a free meal at school, and depending on eligibility criteria, we will get additional pupil premium funding to support your child's learning and to provide additional financial support towards trips, learning resources and uniform. You can check eligibility criteria and make an application on the [KCC free school meals](#) site.

Although sixth form students do not receive the pupil premium, applications can be made for [Weald of Kent bursary](#) funding.

See what other support you can get from your local authority

Local authorities have lots of different schemes that you might be eligible for, including:

- KCC [Crisis and Resilience Fund](#) provides one-off support to individuals and families experiencing a financial crisis.
 - The [holiday activities and food programme](#) – access to food and activities over the school holidays. If your child is eligible for free school meals (see above), they'll also qualify for free access to this programme.
 - [Help with transport to school](#)
 - [Emergency welfare scheme for people experiencing a short-term crisis](#)
 - [Kent Together](#) cost of living support and helpline
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Get free or low-cost food

If you are worried about not having enough food to feed your family, you are not alone. There are a number of places offering support.

- If you have a child under 4, and meet the eligibility criteria, you may be entitled to [healthy start food vouchers](#)
 - Find a local foodbank with these websites: [Bankuet](#), [The Independent Food Aid Network](#), the [Trussell Trust](#), or your local [community fridge](#)
 - [FEAST](#) food charity based in Kent.
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- Use food waste apps and websites like [Olio](#) (for free food and household items from your local community), [Too Good To Go](#) (for low cost food from local restaurants), or [Low Price Foods](#) (food that has passed its best before date, but is still safe to consume)

Free hygiene products

- Free sanitary products are available to all students via Student Services on each campus.
- Food banks may offer free toiletries and sanitary products. Check with your local food bank (links above) to see what's available.
- Find the cheapest disposable sanitary products on [Sanitary Saver](#)

Replace or repair household items at a low cost or for free

Check if you can get broken household goods replaced or repaired by your local community.

- Get free household goods on [Freecycle](#)
- Get help with DIY repairs at a [Repair Cafe](#)

Find a warm space to beat the chill

Some community spaces open their doors to provide a safe and warm space for a few hours. Many also offer hot drinks and WiFi.

Find a warm space on:

- [Warm Welcome](#)
- [Warm Spaces](#)

Further information

- Contact [StepChange](#), if you are struggling with debt
- Contact [Shelter](#) if you are having issues related to housing
- Contact the [Salvation Army](#) for emergency assistance
- See if you are eligible for [grants from Turn2us](#)
- Single parents can get support from [Gingerbread](#)
- [Cost of living support: Overview](#) - GOV.UK
- [Universal Credit: What Universal Credit is](#) - GOV.UK
- [Child Benefit: How it works](#) - GOV.UK
- [Free Childcare for Working Parents: Check if you're eligible](#) - GOV.UK
- Free and impartial help with money, backed by the government - [MoneyHelper](#)